Topics and Cases in
American Foreign Policy

Department of Political Science
College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Central Florida

inr4104a - Topics and Cases in American Foreign Policy
David Houghton

Instructor Contact

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Introduction

Welcome to INR4104 *Topics and Cases in American Foreign Policy*, Summer D 2013. This version of the course is fully online, and there are no face-to-face meetings. On this website you will find the course schedule, which will tell you what to read - and in some cases what to watch or listen to - in each Module (click on 'Schedule'). Modules generally post at 5pm on a Friday, with the exception of Module 1 (which will post on the first day of class, and is already available). Each week a new Module will be posted which will ask you to complete various readings and do assignments, in most cases within seven days. It is absolutely vital that you check this website site regularly (especially the Module list, course mail and schedule). New modules will generally post every Friday at 5pm.

Course Description

This class builds upon the material presented in basic introductions to U.S. foreign policy (such as INR 4102), examining classic case studies in more depth than we have time for in an introductory course. The first part of *Topics in American Foreign Policy* will examine at length the various forces and pressures which impact upon those whose job it is to make foreign policy decisions, looking in particular at the part played by organizational, group and individual psychological forces in the formulation of those decisions. We shall describe these general approaches in terms of three theories, each of which captures a different dimension of governmental decision-making: *Homo Bureaucraticus*, *Homo Sociologicus* and *Homo Psychologicus*.

The second part of the course will apply these three theories in considerable detail to a selection of major events/crises in American foreign policy since the 1960s. The six principal case studies will be the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the 1965 Vietnam escalation decisions, the Iran hostage crisis of 1979-81, the Kosovo intervention of 1999 and the decision to invade Iraq in 2003. We will view each event through the lenses of different theories which have been developed in order to understand the process of foreign policy decision-making.

Required Text

The main text we will use is my own book:

David Patrick Houghton, *The Decision Point* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

All author profits from the sale of this book to UCF students will be donated to charity. Other readings will occasionally be used as well, and these will be posted as PDF files on this website (see 'Readings Box' on this website).

A Word of Warning About Online Courses

If you haven't taken an online class before, you should know that they can be quite gruelling: since there are no face to face meetings, there is a good deal more reading than you might do in an ordinary face-to-face class and more video material to watch. This will require a great deal of intensive reading on your part. Do not take this course unless you are strongly motivated to do the readings and other assignments on time. You should also note that the exams will be heavily based on the textbook, so you will inevitably run into problems at exam time if you don't keep up with the readings.

Rules of Assessment

The final grade will be composed of three elements:

- A Midterm Multiple Choice Examination composed of 50 questions, drawn from the material covered to that point. It can be taken at any point between Friday 7 June at 5pm and Friday 14 June. This exam is worth 40% of your overall grade.
- A Final Multiple Choice Examination taken composed of 100 questions, drawn from the whole course. It can be taken at any point between Friday 5 July at 5pm and Friday 12 July. This exam is worth 50% of your overall grade.
- Discussion postings will collectively account for 10%. You will usually have a week to do each posting, and discussion topics will close when the week ends (see individual Modules for details). Note: although I will allow every member of the class to do *one* late posting during the semester, after that I will deduct 1% from your 10% Discussions score for every posting which appears late. It is therefore very much in your interest to ensure that you do the readings and discussion postings on time.

Makeup examinations and essay will be offered *only in the very rarest of circumstances*. In order to be eligible to take a makeup exam or get an essay extension, you must give a *convincing written explanation*, backed up with proper medical or other documentation, as to why you were unable to meet the expectations required of other class members. Only where the instructor is fully satisfied that the student could not be expected to complete the original assignment/examination given his or her personal circumstances will any exceptions whatsoever be granted. Note also that any makeup examination *will not necessarily be of the same format as the original exam*.

Finally, please note that ***no extra credit*** will be offered in this course; by continuing with the course, you are agreeing to abide by its rules of assessment and agreeing to accept the marks/grades assigned to your work. The grading scheme will be as follows:

A 90 or above
A- 88-89
B+ 86-87
B 82-85
B- 80-81
C+ 78-79
C 73-77
C- 70-72
D+ 67-69
D 63-66
D- 60-62
F Below 60

Academic Honesty

Cheating of any kind on an examination or other class component will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and

will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Schedule of Classes and Readings

The following readings may be subject to change as the course proceeds, but any additional articles/book chapters I add will be made available online via the 'Readings Box' on this website.

Post Date	Module	Topic	Activity
Part I: Theories			
Monday 13 May	1	Introduction to Class	Overview of objectives and methods of assessment, plus a bird's eye view of what we'll be covering during the semester. Post discussion to 'Introductions'.
Friday 17 May	2	Foreign Policy Traditions/Homo Bureaucraticus	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapters 1 and 2.
Friday 24 May	3	Homo Sociologicus/Homo Psychologicus	Houghton, Chapters 3 and 4.
Part II: Case Studies			
Friday 31 May	4	The Bay of Pigs/Cuban Missile Crisis	Houghton, Chapters 5 and 6. Video, *At The Brink* and discussion. This is Volume 5 of an old PBS series called *War and Peace In The Nuclear Age*. This remains the best visual account of the Cuban missile crisis, and it is currently available on YouTube (in four segments) here.
Friday 7 June	5	Midterm Examination	Midterm Examination, taken online at any point between Friday 7 June 5pm and Friday 14 June 5pm. The exam will be all topics and readings covered so far, and consists of 50 multiple choice

			questions.
Friday 14 June	6	Vietnam/The Iran Hostage Crisis	Houghton, Chapters 7 and 8. Video, *LBJ*, available online here.
Friday Friday 21 June	7	Kosovo/The Iraq Invasion	Houghton, Chapters 9 and 10. Video, PS Frontline *The War Behind Closed Doors* available online here.
Friday 28 June	8	Conclusions	Houghton, Chapter 11.
Friday 5 July	9	Final Examination	Cumulative examination taken online, 100 multiple choice questions. This can be taken at any time between Friday 5 July at 5pm and Friday 12 July at 5pm.